

## Orthoptera in Britain in 1936.

By MALCOLM BURR, D.Sc., F.R.E.S.

The past year, in spite of the execrable weather, has been an eventful one for Orthopterists in Britain, as it has seen the addition of one very distinctive species to our list, an isolated occurrence of another most surprising one, and the confirmation of one of our greatest rarities.

The addition is, of course, *Conocephalus fuscus*, Latr., which Dr. Blair recognized among material taken five years ago in the Isle of Wight. It will probably be found in many other suitable localities. Collectors should keep their eyes open for this, and for the macropterous var. *burri* of the better known *C. dorsalis*.

The surprise is *Caloptenus italicus*, L., a female of which was recently reported from Ballard Down in Dorsetshire by Mr. J. D. Cowper. This is so unexpected that special effort should be made next August to find if this species is really established there.

The rarity confirmed is *Acrydium bipunctatum*, L., the northern form of our familiar *A. vittatum*, Zett., which has been for so long known under the name *kiefferi* and *bipunctatum*. This northern form, the one described originally by Linnaeus, and later by de Saulcy as *kraussi*, has much shorter antennal segments than the central form, and once seen is unmistakable. It was on our list on the strength of a specimen without data in the British Museum and two from Abernethy in the Cambridge Museum. Now I have pleasure in recording that Mr. Roger Waterston has taken a series at Clackmannan Forest, in south Perthshire, which is not far from Abernethy. In reply to my S.O.S. of a year ago, I have received specimens of *Acrydium* from the Outer Hebrides (Barra), from Argyll and Invernessshire, but they are all *A. vittatum*, as are all English specimens that I have seen.

No other occurrences of special interest. Mr. F. H. Lancum, in "The Shooting Times," records in Devonshire a blindworm eating *Tettigonia viridissima*, which is reported by Mr. Kimmins to have been vociferous along the coast from Herne Bay to Reculver in the summer. Mr. Paul Freeman has taken *Metrioptera brachyptera*, L., in Burnham Beeches and *M. roeseli*, Hag., at Billericay. This was on hilly country, about sixteen miles from Southend, the furthest record from the coast that I have heard of.

I have had little chance of field work myself, but managed to find a single male *Ph. cinerea*, L., and *Lept. punctatissima* in oak in a hedge near Dorney. Grasshoppers were few and far between, and it was only by hard work that I was able to find a few odd individuals of the commonest species, *Ch. bicolor* and *Ch. parallelus*, near Dorney.

In August I spent a day collecting in Donnington Park, in Leicestershire, where I hoped to find something interesting, but all I came across was about three *Ch. parallelus* and swarms of common earwigs on the trees.

On 14th August I was able to steal an hour on Rushmere Common, near Ipswich, where I found a few straggling *M. maculatus* and one or two *Ch. bicolor*.

A great adventure for me was an hour or two with sweep-net and bottle, under brilliant sunshine, on 27th August, at Aberlady, in Haddingtonshire, my first day out in Scotland. I was directed to the

place by Dr. Stephens of the Royal Scottish Museum, and it certainly looks splendid collecting ground. It is the mouth of a burn, which runs out into flats through sand dunes, on the coast. It is particularly rich in birds. There were plenty of redshank, and green, ringed and golden plover. There were terns about, though I did not see the roseate, which occurs there. But I did see three ravens out for a stroll on Gullane golf-links. I was puzzled for a time by small flocks of birds that looked the size of starlings with the same flight, until I realized that they really were starlings. What had puzzled me was their note, for these feathered monkeys were imitating the melancholy whistle of the Redshank, which is numerous along the burn. There was a small camp of boy scouts, whose latrines provided immense flocks of flies, but of other insects there were few. Of Orthoptera, by dint of patient search, I was able to find about half a dozen specimens each of *Chorthippus bicolor*, Charp., and *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*, Thunb.

Some interesting new localities have been noted for common species by the expedition to Barra, in the outer Hebrides, organized in 1935 by the Biological Society of the University of Edinburgh. The results of the expedition are very interesting and well worth reading (*Proc. R. Phys. Soc.* XXII. Part 5). The common earwig was found abundantly all over the island, *Acrydium vittatum*, Zett., two females, and *Omocestus viridulus*, L., was generally distributed through the island, but not so common as *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*, Thunb., which is abundant.

I am hoping that my little book will fulfil its purpose, which is to stimulate interest and work. It has begun its function by producing the record of *C. italicus*. I hope orthopterists will crop up all over the country, especially in outlying districts, and send in their notes to *The Entomologist's Record*.

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### Euplecti as Myrmecophiles.

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Although the species of *Euplectus* in general are not considered to be regular Myrmecophiles, or, as Wasmann puts it, they appear to be only accidental ant guests, still, I think, as the evidence below will show, they are rather more than that. They belong to the *Pselaphidae* of which many species in the World are regular guests and, indeed, only found with ants. Moreover, as so many of them are frequently found in company with ants, and occasionally in large numbers, it is evident that they have gone a little further along the road towards becoming regular guests than just, what I have called, experimenting with the myrmecophilous habit. I find I have taken some ten species in Windsor Forest alone in company with ants, and in some cases in considerable numbers. The following is a list of the records I am aware of where species of *Euplectus* have occurred with ants:—

*Euplectus punctatus*, Muls., with *A. (D.) brunneus* in ash trees, Windsor Forest 9.vii.26.

*Euplectus tomlini*, Joy, with *A. (D.) brunneus* in oak tree, Windsor Forest 15.ix.36.